



State Representative Trent Van Haaften

Inside: Legislation I Authored

- Protection for Victims of Crimes
- Definitions of Motorized Farm Vehicles

A Halfway Update of the 2004 Session of the General Assembly

Earned Income Tax Credit Could you benefit?

✍ In tax year 2001, the average Hoosier family received more than \$1,612.

✍ File taxes to receive your credit.

✍ If you are eligible for the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit you may also be eligible for an Earned Income Tax Credit from the state of Indiana.

Read more information inside

Legislation I have authored

During the first half of this year’s general assembly I have authored and co-authored several bills. I am very proud to report that two of the bills I authored have been passed by the House of Representatives and have now been sent to the Senate. I am hopeful that they will receive support in the Senate as they did in the House. These bills are:



•House Bill 1245—Crime Victims; Neglect of Dependent

This bill provides that unless ordered by the court, a prosecutor shall not disclose information identifying a crime victim during discovery and other proceedings. The bill provides that the court may impose reasonable restrictions on disclosures of crime victim identifying information.

This bill also makes neglect of a dependent a Class A felony instead of a Class D felony if the neglect results in the death of a dependent who is less than 14 years of age and is committed by a person at least 18 years of age. It also makes contributing to delinquency a Class C felony instead of a Class A misdemeanor if the person furnishes alcohol or a controlled substance to a minor and consumption of the alcohol or drug is the proximate cause of the death of any person.



•House Bill 1359—Motorized Farm Vehicles

For the purposes of the motor vehicle code, this bill changes the defined term “implement of husbandry” to “implement of agriculture.” The bill also requires the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) to determine categories of “implements of agriculture” by rule. It redefines the term “farm tractor” for purposes of the motor vehicle code. The BMV will be required to adopt rules to identify and define “farm truck,” “farm trailer,” and “farm semitrailer and tractor.”

The bill also defines special machinery and sets a fee for registration. It provides that certain motor vehicles may be operated and registered as farm trucks, farm trailers, or farm semitrailers and tractors if not used for certain commercial enterprises. House Bill 1359 also makes it a Class C infraction (and a Class B infraction for a second offense within three years) to operate or own a farm truck, farm trailer, or farm semitrailer and tractor if the vehicle is used for certain commercial enterprises.

The bill also prohibits a law enforcement officer from impounding certain farm products when a vehicle is discovered in violation of registration requirements.

The Earned Income Tax Credit provides refundable federal tax for Hoosier Families!



Unclaimed Tax Dollars in Indiana

Could you benefit?

Did you realize that Indiana’s working citizens have left more than \$100 million unclaimed tax dollars? The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a refundable federal income tax credit, based upon family size and earned income, for working individuals and families with low incomes.

The EITC could provide you with as much as \$4,204 if you are a working family with an income of \$34,692, or below, for the 2003 tax year.

The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration estimates that as many as 84,000 Hoosiers qualify but are not claiming the credit. In addition to the tax savings for

2003, if you were eligible but have not claimed the credit in the past you are able to back file for the credit for up to three years.

Most individuals who are eligible for the EITC credit do not claim it because they either haven’t heard about the EITC or do not know how to apply. There are several places you can contact to learn more about the EITC to see if you are eligible for this credit. These include:

The IRS hotline: 1-800-829-1040

The IRS website: www.irs.gov

The Family and Social Services

Administration’s EITC website:

www.in.gov/fssa/eitc

Economic Impact of the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)							
	Population	EITC Dollars (in millions)	Number of Filers Receiving EITC	Percent of County Population Receiving EITC	Average EITC Refund	Number of Filers That May Be Eligible and Not Receiving the EITC	Potential EITC Dollars
Indiana	6,080,458	\$569.8	361,359	5.9%	\$1,577	72,272	\$113,960,000
Gibson County	32,716	\$2.8	1,827	6%	\$1,526	457	\$251,920
Posey County	27,067	\$1.7	1,089	4%	\$1,547	252	\$152,436
Vanderburgh County	171,922	\$18.1	11,438	7%	\$1,586	2,796	\$1,619,285

Session Update

Now that we have reached the halfway point of the 2004 General Assembly, I am proud that several pieces of legislation have been passed to the Senate for consideration. These initiatives will improve Indiana as a better place to work and raise a family.

In addition to the legislation that I have highlighted on the inside of this newsletter, the following House Bills have been passed:

- HB 1080 Business Purchasing Preference**
This bill will help stimulate the Indiana economy by providing a price preference to Indiana businesses for public works and procurement contracts. This piece of legislation will focus on Indiana companies first as suppliers for goods and services the state is interested in purchasing. The price preference can be as much as 5% of the contract costs.
- HB 1265 Prescription Drug Purchasing**
More than 400,000 Hoosiers would gain access to affordable prescription drugs through HB 1265, which sets up programs to allow the state to purchase

prescription drugs in bulk from pharmaceutical companies at reduced rates, with the savings passed on to those who take part in the program.

- HB 1309 Workers Compensation**
HB 1309 will help Hoosier workers injured on the job get improved benefits in a timelier fashion. The average weekly wage that an injured worker received while off the job will increase and the system used to handle disputed claims will be streamlined, allowing for faster resolution of cases.
- HB 1268 Child Protection**
This bill will help officials identify failures in the state’s child protection system and implement better safeguards. An independent child advocate will respond to complaints about public services for children, a statewide committee will identify ways to prevent serious injuries to children, additional oversight will be provided in cases where a child dies from abuse, and proper safety measures will be put in place to protect all children in a home where one child has been abused.

Rep. Trent Van Haaften—working for you

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